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# SERMON,

PREACHED

AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH IN HALIFAX,

ON FRIDAY JUNE 24, 1785,

BEING

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST;

BEFORE

## THE GRAND LODGE,

AND THE

## OTHER LODGES,

OF THE

ANCIENT AND HONORABLE SOCIETY

OF

## FREE and ACCEPTED MASONS,

IN HALIFAX, NOVA-SCOTIA.

By the Rev. JOSHUA WINGATE WEEKS, A.M

HALIFAX:

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# IN GRAND LODGE,

HALIFAX, *June* 29, 5785.

*Reſolved Unanimouſly,*

THAT the Thanks of this Lodge be given to the Reverend Brother WEEKS, for his Sermon, delivered in *St. Paul*'s Church, on *Friday* laſt, before this and the other Lodges of Free and Accepted ANCIENT MASONS, in the Town of *Halifax*, aſſembled for the Purpoſe of celebrating the Feſtival of St. *John*, Baptiſt: And that the Right Worſhipful Brothers CAMPBELL, SNELLING and WOOD, be a Committee to wait on Brother WEEKS, and requeſt a Copy of the ſame for the Preſs.

JOSEPH PETERS,

*Grand Secretary.*

TO

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

JOHN GEORGE PYKE, ESQUIRE,

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER,

AND

TO THE OFFICERS AND BRETHREN

OF THE

GRAND,

AND OTHER

LODGES,

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED ANCIENT MASONS,

IN HALIFAX,

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE,

AND FAITHFUL BROTHER,

JOSHUA WINGATE WEEKS.

# A SERMON, &c.

PROV. xxii. 2.

*"The Rich and Poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all."*

THIS is the day, my Brethren, which our Fraternity, from early time, have dedicated to the worſhip of God and the cultivation of ſocial love. To this day they have ever paid a very particular reſpect in every part of the globe: For on this day they have uſually aſſembled together to preſerve the unity of the ſpirit in the bonds of peace and to expreſs their gratitude to God by doing good to men.

From your preſence here at this time it may be preſumed, that the ſame benevolent and pious deſigns have drawn you together: that, pleaſed with

with the return of this anniverſary, you are deſirous of conſecrating it to the purpoſes of friendſhip and charity.

Would to God, that I were able to diſcharge the office, which your partiality has aſſigned me, in a manner becoming its dignity and importance! Were my power equal to my will; were my capacity proportionate to my inclination; wiſdom, ſtrength and beauty ſhould unite in doing ample juſtice to the merits of our Royal Art. But while I own, that I am but ſlenderly qualified to anſwer your expectations on this occaſion; I ſtill flatter myſelf that the antiquity of our inſtitution, the importance of its laws and the ſublimity of its myſteries will claim ſome degree of attention from every lover of Science. And this reſpectable audience, knowing the difficulty of ſpeaking on this ſubject, will candidly accept my ſincere deſire of doing good, though it be not recommended by the charms of eloquence.

Animated by the hope of that indulgence, which has

has never been denied me, I always appear before you with pleasure; but never more so than now, when I see such a numerous body of men, formed under one head, connected by one interest, and engaged in one pursuit, the pursuit of harmony, truth and beneficence. And do thou, O Fountain of wisdom! illuminate my mind, and warm my heart, that I may explain the mysteries of godliness with clearness and energy!

This spacious earth, in which the rich and poor meet together was raised by the Supreme Architect to be a standing monument of his inimitable skill. Indeed in every part of the creation, we can trace the footsteps of a deep design; but in the formation of man, we can clearly discover the characters of a divine wisdom. Man therefore is called the chief of his works and the Lord of this lower world, bearing evident marks of his image and perfection; and on earth there is none like him: For he can lift his heart and voice and eyes in devotion to heaven.

In the works of a perfect Being, there can be no void, no chaſm: And where all is full, there muſt be an infinite variety of creatures ſuited to their reſpective places, and riſing one above another by an eaſy gradation; And yet in reſpect of God, they all meet together on the level of equality; they all carry on their works within the compaſs of his obſervation, and regularly and uniformly concur in the grand deſign of promoting univerſal good.

As he hath made one ſtar to differ from another ſtar in glory; ſo hath he ordained different ranks and orders in ſociety, each contributing its part towards the welfare of the whole. And to every individual he hath given the light of reaſon to contemplate the divine works, and the uſe of ſpeech to ſet forth the divine praiſe: And ſhould not this light be regarded, this faculty exerciſed? Doth not the ſun by day, the moon by night and the ſtars in their courſes, by wonderful ſigns, without voice or ſound, proclaim the glories of their Creator? And ſhall any order of men, from the

higheſt

higheſt maſter-builder to the loweſt fellow-labourer, refuſe to help forward the divine work of love? Indeed the great men of the earth, bearing the lively characters of the divine majeſty and authority, may be willing to excuſe themſelves from this employment. But ſhould they not conſider, that though we look up to them with a ſort of reverential awe; though we ſay they are Gods and children of the moſt High: Yet the ſupreme Being, who inhabiteth eternity and dwelleth in light, views them all with an equal eye. "He accepteth not "the perſon of princes, nor regardeth the rich more "than the poor; for they are all the work of his "hands."* Under the ſhadow of his protection, the rich and poor meet together on equal ground and are alike the objects of his providential care and governance.

Of the middle rank between theſe two extremes there are multitudes in every ſociety: Theſe make up the bulk of the community. They are rich when compared with the poor; and poor when compared with the rich,

* Job xxxiv. 19.

as

as the oak, that graceth the plain, is high in reſpect of the ſhrubs, that creep beneath it, and low in reſpect of the mountain, that rears its head above the clouds.

Job, who lived in the eaſt whence the light of Maſonry firſt aroſe, was in different periods of his life an eminent example both of oppulence and indigence. In his early days heaven had ſhowered down on him its richeſt bleſſings. Even the ſumptuous eaſt had never beheld a man ſo magnificently great. His fields were extenſive, his flocks numerous, his houſes ſplendid, his children riſing into conſequence, his health good and his conſcience eaſy. Can imagination paint a man in more enviable colours? Alas! on what a ſandy foundation doth the fabrick of human happineſs reſt? and how ſuddenly may it be deſtroyed by the ſtorm of adverſity! See calamities ruſhing on him, not like winds or floods, but like lightning caſt from heaven! ſee him in one day deſpoiled of his property, of his health and of his children! And in the anguiſh of diſtreſs, hear him exclaiming,

" Have

" Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye " my friends: For the hand of God hath touched " me†."

Had he waſted his eſtate by luxury and extravagance; had he ruined his conſtitution by vice and debauchery; had he driven away his friends by inſolence and unkindneſs, he would have ſhewn himſelf to have been one of the Devil's poor; and no man would have dropped a tear on his misfortunes. But his ſufferings were not the fruit of his vices: For he belonged to the family of heaven, being a " perfect and an upright man, one that feared " God and eſchewed evil.‖ His ſufferings were the correction of a father's hand, who doth not willingly afflict the children of men, and who even in wrath remembers mercy.

You ſee men riſing on the ruins of innocence and growing rich by fraud and treachery: Can you ſuppoſe a holy and righteous God approves of this? No; he only ſuffers ſuch irregularities to take place, that he may manifeſt to all the world,

of

† Job xix. 21. ‖ Job i. 1.

of what ſmall eſtimation wealth is held in his ſight, ſince he frequently permits the worthleſs to ſhare it among them.

You ſee God's own children perſecuted and oppreſſed even for their goodneſs: you ſee them leaving houſes and lands, their friends and their country for the ſake of doing their duty and keeping a good conſcience: Shall we ſay that heaven is unjuſt, becauſe theſe men ſuffer? No; God wiſely permits theſe things to happen, as a good Governor permits what he is far from encouraging or approving. Infinite wiſdom however bringeth good out of evil: For by ſufferings, their virtues are encreaſed, their graces brightened, and their imperfections cleared away, as gold is refined and purified from its droſs by paſſing through the furnace.

In every community, a ſubordination of rank is neceſſary and unavoidable; and in all times and places, there muſt be a mixture of rich and poor. This ſubordination, this mixture conduces very much to the order, happineſs and improvement

provement of civil life: Nor can ſociety be kept up without it; any more than a proſpect can be beautiful, where neither the humble valley nor the lofty mountain ſtrikes the eye with an agreeable variety. Thus when Solomon was building the magnificent temple at Jeruſalem, in the ſtructure of which the Royal Craft exerted their utmoſt ſkill, he appointed ſome to hew ſtone, others to bear burdens, and others to overſee and direct the work, that each one might move uſefully in his own ſphere and apply all his wiſdom and ſtrength in promoting the Grand Deſign.

It muſt be remembered however, that abundant wealth and extreme indigence are diſorders in the preſent conſtitution of things, ariſing from the vices of men, not the appointment of God: For he hath commanded us to apply a cure to theſe diſorders whenever we have power and opportunity.

For this end civil government was eſtabliſhed, that one man might be prevented from taking any undue

undue advantage of another: For while it may ſeem to increaſe an inequality of condition, it ſufficiently prevents or removes the evils of it, by making the common good the meaſure of juſtice and by placing all men on even ground under the authority and protection of law.

For this end the chriſtian religion was publiſhed, that all men might have an equal chance of ſecuring their ſhare of happineſs. For were the commands of our divine Maſter obſerved, none would be exorbitantly rich, none wretchedly poor; the abundance of the one would flow to the neceſſity of the other, as the rivers deſcending from the hills flow to the ſea, where they mingle amicably together and ſettle at laſt into an even ſurface.

For this end this antient Fraternity was formed, that happineſs might be diffuſed equally among all its members. For though it deprives no man of the honour due to his rank and character; yet it reduces all men to a pleaſing and rational equality. Beyond any inſtitution of human original, it

inculcates

inculcates induſtry in acquiring, temperance in uſing, and charity in diſtributing the good things of life. O Charity! Fair daughter of heaven and bright image of God! At thine altar, let others offer the fruit of their lips; but with a liberal hand we will ſcatter thy bleſſings among the ſons of want.

Have I then any need to point out the particular duties reſulting from the relation of the rich and poor to each other? No; I will only remind you of your general obligation as Maſons; and this will diſcover the particular offices of love becoming every ſtation, as the morning light diſperſes the darkneſs and cauſeth all objects to appear in their true relation and proper colour.

Selfiſhneſs contracts the human heart; it makes men forget their neareſt relations; it aboliſhes all the ties of nature and blood; and where ever this reigns, there can be no ſuch thing as friend or brother: But benevolence unites all men by the ſtrongeſt cement; it is to them inſtead of parents and friends, of guardians and protectors. It re-

moves the evils of poverty; nay, it doth more; it communicates happineſs; it putteth every man on a level with regard to the real neceſſaries of life; it wipes the tear from the cheek of the mourner and cauſeth the widow's heart to expand with joy. It makes the enemies of the brotherhood who ſpeak evil of it without cauſe, aſhamed of their unkindneſs; the enemies of the brotherhood do I ſay? yes and the enemies too of juſtice, peace and order it makes aſhamed of their folly, and renders them uſeful to themſelves, to their country and to mankind. O ye ſpirits departed, whoſe names are written in the book of life; with what joy have ye ſeen Charity reaching out forgiveneſs even to her enemies! O ye Angels, who rejoyce at the repentance of a Sinner, how often have ye ſeen her diſperſing comfort among the heirs of ſalvation! O ye ſacred walls, which bear witneſs to the devotions of the ſaints, how often have ye ſeen her alms aſcending, like incenſe, to the throne of God?

But why do I indulge this pleaſing ſpeculation? before a body of men united for the expreſs purpoſe

poſe of alleviating miſery and communicating happineſs, need I enlarge on the excellencies of charity? Need I preſs this duty on you as men, as chriſtians, as maſons?

Need I ſay, that as men, nature teacheth you to be kindly affectioned one to another? when the wounds, the diſtreſs, the groans of the wretched arreſt thy feelings; doth not ſympathy call on thee to aſſiſt, to comfort, to relieve? And canſt thou turn a deaf ear to the affecting accents of diſtreſs? Canſt thou harden thy heart againſt the tender emotions of pity? No; you are moved, penetrated, melted; For you are taught of God to love one another.

Need I remind you, that as chriſtians, the duty of brotherly love is made more obvious and indiſpenſible in the goſpel, than it ever was by the light of nature? Chriſt Jeſus, the Grand Architect of the church, a few hours before he took his final leave of his followers, gave them a new commandment, ſaying, "As I have loved you, ſo love "ye one another; By this diſtinguiſhing badge

"ſhall

" ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples."†

Need I inform you, that as Maſons, ye profeſs yourſelves to be the ſons of mercy? that your benevolence ſhould not be narrow and partial; but free and unconfined; ſpreading every way, like the Arch of heaven. As the river Nile, while the ſource of it remains a ſecret, annually ſwells into a mighty current and overſpreads diſtant countries, leaving behind it fertility and abundance where-ever it paſſes. Benevolence doth not reſtrain its enlivening influences to one ſect or religion, to one nation or climate: It reaches, like the power of attraction, to the ſmalleſt and to the largeſt bodies in the univerſe, uniting men of all degrees and of all nations in the bonds of friendſhip. The language of Charity is univerſal; all the brotherhood know and underſtand it: For they are maſters of a ſecret language, by which they can make themſelves known to each other at a diſtance, and can converſe together even without the uſe of ſpeech. So that in every country, where the providence of God may caſt them, they will find

† John xiii. 34, 35.

an

an home; in every country they will receive a welcome; in every country they will meet with a brother: And this Royal Art will call forth releif, when all other means of procuring it, may fail.

Of an art ſo antient, ſo honorable, ſo uſeful, I need not enlarge. But this being your firſt appearance in the character of a regularly conſtituted Grand Lodge, permit me to congratulate you on this auſpicious occaſion.

And as we are directed to look up in gratitude to God for the ſucceſs of every beneficial inſtitution, which takes place among men, "So look "down from heaven, O God, behold and viſit "this vine†." This vine, this fraternity was early planted and aſſiduouſly cultivated by men of the firſt diſtinction in the Province. Both the Province and the fraternity have grown up under their paternal care and indulgence, nor have they yet withdrawn from it their kind offices.

At this time alſo we are under the adminiſtration of a man, who, while he may be ſtyled the

†Pſalm lxxx. 14. Father

father of the people, eſteem it no diſhonour to own himſelf a brother; and who among other laudable attempts to promote peace and amity among the ſubjects of his Prince, has patronized the Craft by diſtinguiſhing one of its lodges with his name.

Nor will our Right Worſhipful Grand Maſter, lately advanced to the honour of preſiding in Solomon's chair, refuſe our congratulations on his inſtalment to this high office. May you uſe the power with which you are inveſted for the intereſt of your King and the good of the Craft. Guided by a mild and pacific diſpoſition, and aided by officers, who, like pillars in the temple, ſupport your authority and adorn their profeſſion, you will ſoon ſpread the Royal Art, which was lately confined to this metropolis, through different parts of the Province; and we ſhall ſoon ſee Maſonry erecting her court and diffuſing her charities, in thoſe very places, which were once the reſidence of wild beaſts or of ſavage men.

THE

The provincial lodges, thus organize ' into a regular body, appear, " beautiful as Tirzah, comely " as Jeruſalem and terrible as an army with ban- " ners*." They will be ſupported by " work- " men, that need not be aſhamed† ;" they will be taught by Maſters, " who comprehend the " light of truth‖," and guarded by officers " who will not remove the antient landmarks which their fathers have ſet§."

By this union of intereſt and deſign, I need not obſerve, that the cauſe of government will be ſtrengthened ; ſince individuals will derive ſo many advantages from it. For were the providence of God to caſt you on an unknown ſhore ; were you to travel through any diſtant country, though ignorant of its language, ignorant of its inhabitants, ignorant of its cuſtoms, you will ſtill have a key, which will give you admittance to the brotherhood, and which will open the treaſures of their charity. And in every regular lodge, to which you may gain acceſs, you will meet with that

* Song of Sol. vi. 4. † 2 Tim. ii. 15. ‖ John i. 5. § Prov. xxii. 28.

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that cordial reception and kind entertainment, which every man wiſhes to receive, and which every man ſhould be willing to give.

And may all the lodges, united for the purpoſe of doing good and cemented by the bands of friendſhip, ever keep in view the deſign of their inſtitution. Diſregarding thoſe little, partial diſtinctions, which have kept even brethren at a diſtance from each other, "may the Watchmen "upon the towers‡," ſuffer every man to paſs, who may give proofs of his being a good Maſon and a true, and who, by his life and converſation, by his character and influence, may adorn his profeſſion

And may each of you, who have been initiated into this charitable Society be "diligent in work- "ing with his hand the thing that is good, that "he may be able to aſſiſt the needy‖." Eſpecially if a brother be in diſtreſs, attend to his calls: if he be in danger, fly to his relief: if he be deceived, tell him the truth: if he be calumniated, juſtify his character. For remember this, that no Inſtitution

‡ 2 Kings xvii. 9. ‖ Eph. iv. 28.

tution of any ſort, can be pleaſing to God, which is not uſeful to Men!

'Thus thinking, and thus acting, you will find out the ſecret*, which is preſerved in the hearts of the faithful. You will underſtand the ſign†, which the children of God always diſcover, by loving the brethren. You will gain the paſs-word which ſhall open to you the door of the celeſtial Lodge§, where you ſhall behold God himſelf, our ſupreme *Grand Maſter*, ſeated in glory, where though clouds and darkneſs veil his awful Majeſty, yet light and joy encircle his throne; where you ſhall join hand in hand with the ſaints; where you ſhall ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb, and ſhall rejoice for ever in the ſmiles of his countenance.

* Pſ. xxv. 4. † 1 John iii. 14. § Rev. iv 2.

FINIS.

Officers of the GRAND LODGE of

*Nova-Scotia.*

R. W. *John G. Pyke*, Eſq ; G. M.

R. W. *William Campbell*, D. G. M.

R. W. *Jonathan Snelling*, S. G. W.

R. W. *Daniel Wood*, jun. J. G. W.

R. W. *Joſeph Peters*, G. S.

R. W. *John Fillis*, jun. G. Tr.

The Rev. Mr. J. W. Weeks, G. Ch.

Mr. William Hall, D. G. S.

Mr. Charles Geddes, S. G. D.

Mr. Andrew Gray, J. G. D.

Mr. James Dykeman, S. G. S.

Mr. John Livingſtone, J. G. S.

Mr. John Lewis, G. Purſuivant.

Mr. Wm. Stewart, G. Tyler.

# LODGES under the Juriſdiction of the GRAND LODGE of *Nova-Scotia*.

No. 155. *St. Andrew's*; on the *Grand Regiſtry* of *England*, conſtituted before the forming of this *Grand Lodge*, held in *Halifax*.

No. 211. *St. John's*, ditto. ditto. held in *Halifax*.

No. 1. *Union*, conſtituted by this *Grand Lodge*, held in *Halifax*.

2. *Artillery*, ditto. held in *Halifax*.

3. *Parr*, ditto. held in *Shelburne*.

4. ( Reſigned. )

5. *Solomon's*, held at *Shelburne*.

6. *Digby*, held at *Digby*.

7. *Temple*, held at *Manchester*,

8. *Hiram*, held at *Sheet-Harbour*.

9. *Cheſter*, held at *Cheſter*,

10. *Hiram*, held at *Shelburne*.

11. *St. George's*, held at *Cornwallis*.

12. *Concord*, held at *Cumberland*.

JOSEPH PETERS, *G. S.*

*Halifax, July* 12, 1785.